

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MINUTES

February 8, 2018
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Commissioners Bishop, Chirls, Lampe, Marciante,
Woosley, Wu

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Teh

STAFF PRESENT: Kevin McDonald, Kristi Oosterveen, Mike Ingram,
Department of Transportation

OTHERS PRESENT: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Bishop who presided.

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Teh who was excused.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Woosley. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chirls and the motion carried unanimously.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Will Knedlick, Box 99, Kirkland, said he did not fully understand the process the Commission has been going through in regard to the demonstration bikeway project, but said he did understand that the Commission has some ongoing responsibility with regard to metrics. He submitted to the Commission a copy of the public disclosure request made informally on February 5 to get some numbers that will be important for metrics. The economics of bikeways start with expropriating capital assets for nothing and using them. He said if he were able to take Bill Gate's house for nothing he could turn it into a very profitable B&B operation. That is exactly what the bike demonstration project and all of the other bike projects do, they take capital assets that have been paid for primarily by motorists and give them to the few people who want to use them for a novelty purpose. He said he would be fine with that so long as city streets were taken that were paid for by the city. To the extent the city is taking 18th Amendment funds that were dedicated exclusively for highway purposes according to the Washington state constitution, Article 2, Section 42, and handing them to someone for nothing. In effect the action is stealing from six million state motorists who are the beneficiaries of the trust which was funded by them for their own purposes, which are exclusively highway purposes. Bicycles are a permitted use on roadways whether or not that is wise given the inherently dangerous nature of bicycling. However, it is not a highway purpose. The

demonstration project has application that goes further. Taking Bellevue Way out of use for a non-highway purpose, namely construction of rail, which the supreme court has said it not a highway purpose, the full and fair market value must be paid for the use of the road. Bicycles need to pay full and fair value for the use of 108th Avenue NE if one dollar of 18th Amendment funds was utilized. Bellevue can become the example in the state of how to go about properly valuing assets that have been taken for nothing and handed to only a few, thereby denying access to the six million licensed drivers in the state who paid for those assets.

Ms. Julia Tai, 2680 139th Avenue SE, brought to the attention of the Commission a public safety issue on Kamber Road. She provided the Commissioners with a map of the area in question. She said there are two sports fields that are part of the Bellevue College campus, and there is a walking trail to the north of the sports field that connects with Kamber Road, providing easy access for local residents and students. The city built a nice staircase at the end of the trail where it connects with Kamber Road. Kamber Road has a sidewalk only on the west side, and there is no crosswalk to get to the trailhead; pedestrians must jaywalk, thus creating a safety hazard. The city should resolve the problem by installing a flashing crosswalk on Kamber Road at the base of the staircase, and should also construct a sidewalk on the east side of Kamber Road from the trailhead to 139th Avenue SE. Traffic volumes on Kamber Road have increased significantly in the last ten years as new developments have gone in. Kamber Road also serves as an offshoot for the Eastgate park and ride users.

Ms. Lisa Lightner, 2840 139th Avenue SE, noted that she previously addressed the Commission about the issue of the Amazon buses parking along the street, and she thanked the Commission and the staff for resolving that issue. She said residents in her neighborhood are seeing a lot of increased traffic. Many who have moved into the neighborhood are in fact walking to the park and ride and to catch the Amazon buses, so it is not just car traffic that has increased. The neighborhood would love to see the city address the needs pointed out by Ms. Tai. She encouraged the Commissioners to take a drive along Kamber Road during peak hours to see the conditions for themselves.

Mr. Bob Pishue with Kemper Development Company, 575 Bellevue Way, commented that Bothell is seeing a large number of Limebikes show up there in various locations, and that is because all Bothell requires is a business license to operate there. They do not have much by way of control or permitting in place. The ways other cities are approaching the bike share issue should be taken into account as Bellevue moves forward with formulating a program. Recently a wheelchair-bound person was blocked from getting into Hec-Ed Pavilion because a bike was blocking his path. There are lots of other such stories, including people tripping over bikes that have been left in various places. He said he lives in Kirkland and for the last ten days has seen a Limebike in Yarrow Point and it has not moved.

4. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCIL, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Commissioner Chirls said Commissioners should feel free to say what they think or believe at the Commission meetings. The meetings are an appropriate forum for expressing thoughts and for debating the pros and cons. The Commission votes on issues that require making a recommendation to the City Council. Once a vote is taken, everyone should at the very least not stand in the way of the recommendation that has been voted on being given to the Council, and should not attempt to undermine the recommendation, even if a vote did not go the way a Commissioner or Commissioners wanted to see it go. That standard of behavior involves both ethical and personal consideration. He said he was quite surprised to see, in regard to the

bikeway project being presented to the City Council, the Chair and Vice Chair send a separate letter to the Council stating their objections to the recommendation of the Commission. He said he hoped the action was an offshoot exception that it was not intended to undermine the power of the recommendation of the Commission, and that it was a mistake. He asked the Chair and Vice Chair to publicly disavow their action and to let the Commission know that they are in fact in support of what the Commission had acted to do, and they did not intend to take a separate and private action to undermine the power of the Commission's recommendation to the City Council. Both the Chair and the Vice Chair have contributed mightily to the positive results the Commission has engendered in the community, and certainly they have contributed to the city through their work on the Commission. Hopefully their work in that regard will continue. If their action was not, however, an exception, and if it was intended in fact to undermine the work of the Commission, it should be noted that such behavior is inappropriate if not unethical and both should tender their resignations. Anyone who cannot abide by the decisions made by the Commission should not be on the Commission, and those who behave unethically should be removed.

Commissioner Woosley reported that along with Commissioner Lampe he attended a presentation in Kirkland regarding their planned bridge along the Eastside Rail Corridor over two major arterials. NE 124th Street and 124th Avenue NE are two of the busiest streets in the city. Totem Lake is the urban center for Kirkland and the area is exploding in terms of development. Their 2035 housing unit targets have already been exceeded by almost 50 percent. Bellevue is looking at regional ped/bike facilities along the Eastside Rail Corridor in Wilburton just as Kirkland is, but Totem Lake is further along in what it calls a skipping stone design. Kirkland is partnering with King County on the grant application process in seeking funding for the project.

Commissioner Lampe said he attended the Washington State Good Roads and Transportation Association legislative breakfast in Olympia where the Secretary of Transportation highlighted the state of the roads in the state. He noted that the state spends about \$550 million annually for maintenance, but what is really needed is closer to \$1.1 billion to address all of the issues.

Commissioner Wu thanked Commissioner Chirls for his comments. Without directly responding to his comments, she highlighted the direction from Mayor Chelminiak who pointed out that dissenting opinions should come from the Commission and be included in the transmittal memo, rather than from individual Commissioners. She said she would like to hear a response from the Chair and Vice Chair.

Commissioner Woosley said he would like to be granted time to prepare a response and to explain the rationale. He said the Commission is charged with serving the Council and providing it with the best recommendations. In other jurisdictions, there are usually alternatives presented and in the future the Commission should consider doing the same to give the duly elected representatives the opportunity to make good policy decisions in the best interest of the community.

Chair Bishop said he took the action he did very deliberately and purposefully. He said the one thing he should have done differently was not identify himself in signing the letter as Chair of the Commission. He said he attempted to communicate in the letter that he and the Vice Chair were speaking as individuals and not as Commissioners in providing a minority report. He said as an individual he has a perfect right to say whatever he wants to regardless of any vote taken by the full Commission. Several Councilmembers appreciated the information he provided and put emphasis on the need to develop metrics that work and that can be evaluated.

The Mayor was gracious in accepting the alternative information and called for changing the process for submitting minority opinions in transmittal memos. He said he would work with Commissioner Woosley to develop an appropriate response.

Principal Transportation Planner Kevin McDonald said the staff take the direction from the Mayor very seriously. Typically the transmittal memos that have been drafted and approved by the Commission have included the Commission's recommendation without specifically allocating space to dissenting or contrary points of view. Such opinions, while they do not appear in the transmittal, do not disappear and generally are embedded in the agenda memo that goes forward to the Council along with the transmittal. Accordingly, the Council has access to the conversation the Commission had in arriving at a recommendation. The direction given was to extract those dissenting comments and include them in the transmittal, and staff will be sincere in its efforts to do that.

Commissioner Woosley said the action taken was not meant to be disrespectful, rather it was intended to improve the process and the information provided to the Council.

Commissioner Wu agreed that Commissioners have the right to speak on their own behalf, but in the course of making public statements they should make it clear that they are not speaking on behalf of the Commission.

Mr. McDonald pointed out that Chair Bishop apologized at the Council meeting for signing the letter as Chair of the Commission.

Commissioner Lampe commended Commissioner Chirls for bringing forward the issue. He said the Council has high regard for the work of the Commission and anything that can be done to hone the process of providing the best possible information should be done.

5. STAFF REPORTS

Mr. McDonald invited the Commissioners to attend the open house event on February 14 that will be focused on the land use and transportation issues regarding redevelopment of the East Main station area. He also highlighted the Wilburton EIS open house and public hearing scheduled for February 28.

Mr. McDonald informed the Commissioners that the next public involvement opportunity for the Bellevue Way HOV project is scheduled for the evening of April 5 at Enatai elementary school.

The Commissioners were reminded to forward to the Transportation Commission at the official email address (transportationcommission@bellevuewa.gov) any and all Commission-related correspondence subsequent to the approval of the bylaws on December 14 to provide for the easy recall in the event of a public records request.

6. STUDY SESSION

A. 2019-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Update

Capital Facilities Planning and Programming Administrator Kristi Oosterveen reminded the Commissioners that the TIP is updated annually. She noted that the materials in the packet outlined the proposed changes to the current TIP and added that a public hearing on the TIP is

mandated and tentatively scheduled for April 12.

The TIP draws projects from the city's long-range facilities plans, the TFP and the CIP, and includes regional projects in which the city may wish to participate. The TIP is not revenue constrained so it can include any project the city might want to do if it had the funds. The TIP, once approved, is forwarded to the Puget Sound Regional Council and to the State Transportation Improvement Program to promote granting opportunities for the projects on the list.

The TIP is divided into four sections. In the first section are uncompleted projects and programs from the current CIP. The second section has projects from the current TFP. Other unfunded projects identified through alternative analyses and pre-design studies, as well as projects on the comprehensive transportation project list, make up the third section. The fourth section includes regional projects or projects led by outside agencies in which the city may wish to participate if financing were available.

Ms. Oosterveen said the proposed update is unique in that no new transportation plans have been adopted since the last TIP update. She said the proposal of staff was to add to Section III the 25 new projects approved as candidates for the TFP, and to delete nine projects: two CIP projects that are projected to be substantially completed in 2018; one project in Section II that is no longer viable because of development that has occurred; three projects in Section III that are not on the comprehensive transportation project list; two projects in Section III that are captured in the Downtown Transportation Plan; and one project in Section III that will be constructed by WSDOT.

Following the April 12 public hearing, the Commission will be asked to approve the document and forward it to the City Council, which must also approve it ahead of submitting it to the state by the due date, which is the end of June.

Commissioner Woosley called attention to project 67, evaluation/implementation of the southbound HOV lane on 148th Avenue SE, and noted the project would widen the roadway from Lake Hills Boulevard southward. Currently being studied are potential short- and long-range congestion reduction projects in the Eastgate/I-90 area. He asked why the project is being recommended to be deleted. Ms. Oosterveen said the project is not on the comprehensive transportation project list, which is the reason why staff have recommended it be deleted. There is work being undertaken in the Eastgate/I-90 area, but the outcomes are not yet known. Because the TIP is updated annually, projects identified as part of the Eastgate/I-90 study can easily be added in a future iteration of the TIP.

Commissioner Woosley commented that back in the day 148th Avenue SE was a highway right-of-way that never got built out. As I-405 filled up and more commuter traffic was seen on 148th Avenue SE, the conversation was about the need to expand the capacity of 148th Avenue SE. Some improvements have been made near Bellevue College and the project could serve as a future phase of those widening. He said he would prefer to see the project retained on the TIP. Ms. Oosterveen said all of the additional comprehensive transportation list projects are included. Those projects were brought to and vetted by the Commission as part of the TFP update, and the projects proposed to be removed are those that are not included on the comprehensive list. However, the Commission could, if it wanted, choose to leave any of the projects on the TIP.

Commissioner Woosley called attention to project 63, West Lake Sammamish Parkway central

and north segments, and suggested the work being done in that area has yielded better information relative to costs. It was previously estimated that each segment could cost about \$8 million, but it has since been realized the cost will actually be much higher. Ms. Oosterveen clarified that none of the project costs had been shored up yet.

Commissioner Woosley noted that approval was recently given to essentially double the size of the Microsoft campus. That will generate a lot more traffic through Bellevue. Bellevue and Redmond should closely coordinate on new facilities.

Commissioner Woosley commented that there are some minor streets in the downtown that are proposed to be brought up to city street standards. He asked staff to return to the Commission with a description of the on-street parking on those streets, particularly in Old Bellevue.

Commissioner Chirls asked if the Kamber Road crosswalk and sidewalk project mentioned during public comments could be added to the TIP. Ms. Oosterveen said staff are engaged in evaluating the Kamber Road segments through the Neighborhood Sidewalks Program framework. The full extent of the improvements needed would exceed the Neighborhood Sidewalk Program funding constraints and would have to be proposed as a full CIP project. The improvements are being scored and if they do not score high enough there may still be ways to address the need to create some crossings using levy funds.

Commissioner Woosley said it sounds as though the needed sidewalks and crossings are actually separate projects and he asked if they should be combined. Ms. Oosterveen said the sidewalk project is being reviewed. If implemented, the crossings would be constructed at the same time. If the sidewalk project is not implemented in the short term, consideration will be given to at least creating the crossings. The evaluation work, however, has not been completed.

Commissioner Lampe asked if the Complete Streets project on 100th Avenue NE to the north of NE 12th Street is proposed for inclusion in the TIP. Ms. Oosterveen said it is a levy project and thus included as part of project R-199.

Chair Bishop suggested it would be useful to identify which projects on the list are associated with the TIFIA loan. Ms. Oosterveen said that could be done by adding a note to the project description.

Chair Bishop noted that description for project 7 references the need to update the plan in 2017 and suggested that should be changed. With regard to project 48, he pointed out the description references adding an eastbound to southbound right-turn lane; the reference should be revised to read southbound to westbound. Ms. Oosterveen explained that she had not gone through all of the project descriptions in Section I are from the adopted CIP.

Chair Bishop called attention to the second new project on page 13 of the matrix, I-90/Lakemont Boulevard SE/West Lake Sammamish Parkway SE, and pointed out that the first two items in the project description have already been done. He asked if the third item was part of WSDOT's project. Ms. Oosterveen said staff would be reviewing the description through the TFP process. The new projects in Section III were approved by the Commission to go forward as candidates for the TFP process.

Ms. Oosterveen asked for clarification regarding whether or not the HOV lane project on 148th Avenue SE should be deleted from the TIP. Mr. McDonald said the project manager has confirmed that if the modeling analysis demonstrates a benefit to congestion reduction, it will

be possible to include the project in a subsequent project list. There was agreement to delete the project from the TIP.

A motion to approve April 12 as the date for the TIP public hearing was made by Commissioner Woosley. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chirls and the motion carried unanimously.

B. 2019-2030 Transportation Facilities Plan (TFP) Update

Senior Transportation Planner Michael Ingram focused on the public involvement strategy relative to updating the TFP. He said the typical approach has involved sending out postcards to all Bellevue addresses informing the recipients about the TFP purpose and their opportunities to weigh in. He said staff were currently working to score all of the candidate projects using the approved criteria. The results of the scoring exercise will be brought to the Commission in March.

Mr. Ingram said there are three elements to the public involvement process, the first of which is an online survey intended to gauge the public's general sentiment of current conditions in terms of traffic congestion, sidewalks and bicycling. The issue of transit could be added to the survey given that it has some relationship to capital facilities, though a less than direct relationship given that the city does not operate buses.

Chair Bishop suggested that if the issue of transit is added to the survey, it should be keyed up in such a way as to stress that a lack of bus service is not something the city can directly address through capital improvements. Capital improvements to enhance bus service is something the city can address. Mr. Ingram said the Transit Master Plan identifies locations where certain changes to conditions on the ground could benefit transit mobility. However, there has not been an additional step taken to look at how a potential change to benefit transit fits in with the other things the city has identified as being potentially of interest at those locations. Ms. Oosterveen pointed out that the survey does include the opportunity for respondents to rank improving the speed and reliability of transit through targeted roadway improvements and enhancements.

Commissioner Chirls noted that the survey did not include a general question about the issues involved in getting to and from transit. He proposed revising Question 13 to simply ask about completing connections from neighborhoods to schools, parks and transit routes.

Commissioner Marciante suggested such a revision would not really gain anything. She said there are already connections from neighborhoods to schools, parks and transit routes in the form of facilities for automobiles. The question needs to be specific about relative to the types of connections. Commissioner Chirls said a cyclist will assume a broad question about providing access will mean bicycle facilities, whereas a pedestrian will assume it refers to pedestrian facilities. The real issue is how important it is to provide access to transit, which is something the city has control over.

Commissioner Woosley said one approach would be to have the respondents prioritize what the sidewalks and trail links from the neighborhood should go to. He pointed out that the city's budget survey done every other year is professionally done and by its very nature more objective. He said it should be used to inform the process going forward. For the TFP survey, the same language used for the scoring and weighting criteria used to evaluate projects should be used as a way of being consistent.

Commissioner Marciante voiced support for the survey as presented to the Commission. She argued against getting too complex. Most citizens do not care who has responsibility for what and who pays for projects and services when it comes to transportation funding. That is where the Commission comes in. The Commission will take the input, interpret it and prioritize things accordingly. Getting too far into the weeds will not aid the process in any way.

Commissioner Wu pointed out that the Commissioners are intended to represent the citizens of Bellevue. Commissioner Chirls agreed and said in that vein it would be useful for the Commissioners to take the survey and compare the results to those from the public.

Chair Bishop said if the survey is intended to pique the interest of people and get them to identify projects on the project list, it will be a good thing. If it is for the Commission to use in reaching conclusions in terms of the preferences of the people, it will be worthless, especially given that the respondents are all self-selected. The Budget survey done by the city every two years would be far more useful given that it is done scientifically. Of the 39 attributes of that survey, 11 are related to transportation. Mr. Ingram said the TFP survey helps to clarify who it is that is weighing in on the projects. It is the feedback on the projects that is the most valuable for the process, but by prefacing it with a survey, folks get to understand the broader context.

Chair Bishop suggested that as drafted, question 10 on the survey will yield no meaningful information. He said that could be remedied by having the respondent indicate how often they utilize each mode of travel. Commissioner Woosley agreed.

Commissioner Lampe called out question 11 and suggested it added no value and was unclear in regard to what it was asking. Commissioner Marciante agreed and said if people answer the question “yes” there should be a way for them to be specific.

Commissioner Lampe said he would like to see question 12 revised to allow the respondents to indicate a relative magnitude of each item listed.

Chair Bishop suggested combining questions 11 and 12.

Commissioner Woosley proposed revising question 12 to refer to once a week rather than twice per month. Commissioner Chirls commented that twice per month sounds like recreational use rather than commuting.

Commissioner Marciante said if the purpose of the survey is to frame questions for the respondents, and if there will not be much extracted from it that will be useful, then the survey is fine the way it is.

Commissioner Woosley commented that if the city were to spend its transportation dollars proportionate to how facilities are actually used, there would be less congestion overall. In order to be useful, the survey should focus on how effective the alternatives are. Chair Bishop suggested that to that end the survey should include an ACES (autonomous, connected, electric and shared) question.

Commissioner Wu agreed with Chair Bishop relative to relying on the city’s budget survey. Commissioner Woosley said the Commission is trying to be more data driven and to that end the city’s larger survey will be more useful.

Commissioner Marciante suggested that if the separate survey is used, it should be kept simple in light of the fact that questions may arise about it not being scientific. She said the survey should be used as a means of getting people engaged in the process, but it should be kept simple.

Commissioner Chirls said if the objective is to create a context around which, after the survey, people will engage with the Commission to comment on projects, alternative marketing ideas should be considered to achieve that end. The survey should not be used for something it is really not intended for.

Ms. Oosterveen said the survey does lead the respondents to an online interactive map showing all of the projects. The tool is useful in that the respondents can learn more about each project and leave comments about specific projects.

Commissioner Chirls suggested it would be better to use social media advertising to get people to the open house events and to the interactive map. Mr. Ingram said the interactive map can certainly be promoted in various ways, and the survey can be skipped entirely. He reiterated, however, that one purpose of the survey is to help clarify who the respondents are. Commissioner Chirls said when people click through to the interactive map, it can be determined where they are coming from, achieving the directive more directly.

Commissioner Marciante countered that there are limits to that approach. The IP address can easily be determined, but it could show up as someone in Seattle when in fact it is from a Bellevue resident responding while at work in Seattle. The survey would certainly offer much better background information about the respondents. Commissioner Chirls said an outreach could direct respondents to the online map, and the page could include questions about where they live and work and how they primarily get around in Bellevue.

Commissioner Wu said her concern is how people get around all day in Bellevue, not just during the peak periods. If everyone who walks to lunch in downtown Bellevue were to drive, congestion would be terrible. There are also issues of equity to keep in mind.

Commissioner Marciante pointed out that the survey included no questions about safety.

Chair Bishop called attention to the draft public involvement strategy and suggested section D should include a bullet referencing the budget survey.

Mr. Ingram said he had heard from the Commission that the survey should be shorter; that it should include asking how people get around and how often by each mode; scrapping the question about tradeoffs and priorities; and directing respondents to the online interactive map.

Ms. Oosterveen shared with the Commissioners an example of the large format postcard used previously announcing the open house events. She noted that three such events are planned, one at City Hall on March 20; one at the South Bellevue Community Center on March 22; and one at Crossroads Mall on March 23. Each will follow the typical open house drop-in format and will allow opportunity for the attendees to indicate their preferences for and against projects.

Chair Bishop asked why South Bellevue Community Center was chosen over Factoria Mall. Ms. Oosterveen explained that Factoria Mall wanted to charge a fee, and there were issues with both availability and where the open house would be set up inside the mall. Mr. Ingram added

that one benefit of locating at the South Bellevue Community Center is the large number of people who recreate there who might not otherwise be tuned into the process.

Ms. Oosterveen said the TFP update would be before the Commission again on March 8.

7. DRAFT MINUTES REVIEW/APPROVAL

A. December 14, 2017

A motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Woosley. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lampe and the motion carried unanimously.

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None

9. NEW BUSINESS – None

10. PUBLIC COMMENT – None

11. COMMISSION CALENDAR

Mr. McDonald reviewed the calendar of upcoming agenda items.

Mr. McDonald noted that Commissioner Chirls had requested to participate remotely in the March 8 Commission meeting.

12. ADJOURN

Chair Bishop adjourned the meeting at 8:33 p.m.

Secretary to the Transportation Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Transportation Commission

Date